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Message Text

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ACTION ARA-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-10
L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15 ICA-11
/068 W
----------075855 262213Z /64
P R 262030Z JUL 78
FM AMEMBASSY QUITO
TO SECSTATE PRIORITY 8890
INFO AMEMBASSY BOGOTA
AMEMBASSY LA PAZ
AMEMBASSY LIMA
AMEMBASSY SANTIAGO
AMCONSUL GUAYAQUIL
USCINCSO QUARRY HTS CZ

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 QUITO 5148

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT, EC
SUBJECT: ELECTORAL TRIBUNAL VOTE CERTIFICATION PROCESS
MAY BE DRAWN OUT

1. THE PRESIDENT OF THE SUPREME ELECTORAL TRIBUNAL (SET), JOSE BAQUERO DE LA CALLE, DETAILED FOR EMBOFF JULY 21 THE SCHEDULE BY WHICH THE SET HOPES TO REVIEW THE RESULTS OF THE FIRST ELECTORAL ROUND AND CALL FOR THE SECOND. THE ELECTIONS LAW CALLS FOR THE SET TO SCRUTINIZE THE ELECTION FIGURES SUBMITTED BY EACH VOTING TABLE (CALLED ACTAS, OF WHICH THERE ARE 4,600), IN PUBLIC SESSIONS ATTENDED BY POLITICAL PARTY REPRESENTATIVES AND THE PRESS. ESTIMATING FIVE MINUTES PER ACTA AND 100 SUCH SCRUTINIES PER DAY, THE SET PUBLICLY ANTICIPATES THAT IT WILL HAVE CONCLUDED ITS REVIEW BY SEPTEMBER 9. THE THE POLITICAL PARTIES WOULD HAVE THREE DAYS TO REGISTER APPEALS WITH THE SET AND THE SET A SUBSEQUENT 10 DAYS TO MAKE FINAL RESOLUTIONS THE CALL FOR THE RUNOFF ELECTION WOULD, IN ACCORDANCE WITH THIS TIMETABLE, BE MADE BY THE SET ON
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SEPTEMBER 22, WITH THE ELECTION ITSELF OCCURRING ON OCTOBER 22.

2. BAQUERO VOLUNTEERED THAT THE SCHEDULE OUTLINED ABOVE IS OPTIMISTIC, SINCE HE THINKS REPRESENTATIVES OF SIXTO DURAN-BALLEN AND RAUL CLEMENTE HUERTA WILL CONTEST MANY OF THE ACTAS AS PRESENTED, REQUIRING AN IMMEDIATE RECOUNT OF THE

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VOTES. ANY PARTY, ACCORDING TO BAQUERO, HAS THE RIGHT TO CHALLENGE AN ACTA, WITHOUT THE REQUIREMENT OF OFFERING SUBSTANTIATING EVIDENCE. IF ENOUGH ACTAS ARE CONTESTED, THE SET'S CERTIFICATION OF THE RESULTS OF THE FIRST ROUND WOULD DRAG ON INDEFINITELY, POSSIBLY, IN THE WORST CASE SCENARIO, POSTPONING THE SECOND ROUND FOR SEVERAL MONTHS. BAQUERO APPEARED TO HAVE ADOPTED A COME-WHAT-COME-MAY ATTITUDE TOWARD THIS EVENTUALITY. PERHAPS IN PART TO FORESTALL SUCH A DELAY, THE SET IS DESPATCHING A COMMISSION TO INVESTIGATE THE VOTING RETURNS IN MANABI PROVINCE, WHERE THE OUTCOME OF THE JULY 16 ELECTION IS BEING HOTLY CHALLENGED BY THE LIBERALS.

3. THE SET'S ANNOUNCED SCHEDULE FOR VOTE CERTIFICATION HAS PROMPTED A FEELING OF UNCERTAINTY AMONG THE CIVILIAN POLITICIANS AND THE ELECTORATE, WHO CONSIDER THE 46-DAY PERIOD (UNTIL SEPTEMBER)) FOR SCRUTINIZING THE ACTAS TO BE EXCESSIVELY DILATORY AND CONDUCIVE TO ELECTORAL MANIPULATION. REACTIONS WOULD NO DOUBT BE MORE SEVERE IF BAQUERO'S EXPECTATION OF DELAY AND INFORMATION REPORTED IN SEPTELS ABOUT MANEUVERING FOR THE RUNOFF ELECTION WERE MORE WIDELY KNOWN. A TYPICAL RESPONSE IS THAT OF ABDON CALDERON, PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE OF THE RADICAL ALFARIST FRONT, WHO LABELED THE SET'S SLOW DELIBERATIONS OVER THE ELECTION RETURNS AS SUSPICIOUS, GIVEN THE AVAILABILITY OF COMPUTERS AND MODERN MEANS OF COMMUNICATION. BAQUERO'S PUBLIC AND PRIVATE CONFIDENTIAL

(AT LEAST TO EMBOFFS) ANSWER TO SUCH CRITICISM IS TO ARGUE THAT THE SET'S HANDS ARE TIED BY THE PROVISIONS OF THE ELECTIONS LAW. HE HAS ALSO SOLICITED THE POLITICAL PARTIES FOR SUGGESTIONS ON HOW TO ACCELERATE THE SCRUTINY.

4. ON JULY 25 THE SET INITIATED THE SCRUTINY PROCESS WITH ITS FIRST PUBLIC SESSION AND, ACCORDING TO THE MORNING PRESS REPORTS, REVIEWED 41 ACTAS, LESS THAN HALF THE NUMBER ANTICIPATED. AT THIS POINT, THE SLOWNESS OF THE REVIEW SEEMS DUE MORE TO THE TRADITIONAL CUMBERSOME FORMALITIES THAN TO CHALLENGES BY THE POLITICAL PARTIES, BUT THE AVAILABLE EVIDENCE IS NOT SUFFICIENT TO PREDICT HOW THE PROCESS WILL CONTINUE TO UNFOLD. HOWEVER, AT THE PRESENT RATE OF SCRUTINY, THE PROCESS WOULD TAKE THREE MONTHS. THERE ARE CERTAIN TO BE MORE CRIES OF ANGUIS BY THE MEDIA AND THE PARTIES WHEN THIS FACT IS DIGESTED.

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 QUITO 5148

5. FOR YOUR INFORMATION, THAT UNOFFICIAL VOTE TOTALS BY PROVINCE AND CANDIDATE REPORTED BY THE PRESIDENTIAL PRESS OFFICE JUNE 17 APPEAR BELOW. THE COLUMN OF TOTALS EXCLUDES NULL AND BLANK VOTES BUT CONTAINS THE VOTES GARNERED BY CANDIDATES RENE MAUGE, RODRIGO BORJA AND ABDON CALDERON. IN PARENTHESES ARE THE PERCENTAGES OF THE VALID VOTES WON BY THE THREE LEADING CANDIDATES BY PROVINCE.

PROVINCE	DURAN	HUERTA	ROLDOS	TOTAL
PICHINCHA	65,579(19)	61,385(18)	79,902(24)	337,404
GUAYAS	60,692(15)	66,621(17)	209,485(52)	403,542
CARCHI	11,095(34)	12,235(37)	6,203(19)	32,993
IMBABURA	16,513(32)	9,184(18)	15,188(29)	52,297
COTOPAXI	8,661(23)	8,559(23)	10,921(29)	37,679
TUNGURAHUA	19,042(30)	11,884(19)	15,602(25)	62,904
BOLIVAR	8,503(35)	5,864(24)	5,044(21)	24,029
CHIMBORAZO	15,549(28)	11,066(20)	14,988 27)	55,374
CANAR	8,979(33)	2,870(11)	10,201(38)	27,163

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AZUAY	26,914(35)	13,783(18)	14,134(18)	77,819
LOJA	36,728(47)	30,023(38)	5,467(7)	78,540
ESMERALDAS	3,572(17)	8,847(42)	5,699(27)	21,200
MANABI	29,491(24)	48,839(40)	21,544(18)	122,654
LOS RIOS	7,946(14)	9,084(16)	17,462(31)	56,343

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EL ORO	14,618(20)	14,912(21)	16,588(23)	71,561
NAPO	1,773(26)	1,549(23)	1,658(24)	6,803
PASTAZA	1,232(21)	1,549(27)	1,570(27)	5,826
MORONA	353(35)	193(19)	309(31)	1,005
GALAPAGOS	398(35)	151(13)	414(36)	1,155
ZAMORA	2,809(43)	2,729(42)	320(5)	6,526
TOTAL	350,447(23)	321,327(22)	452,699(31)	1,482,817

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Disposition Case Number: n/a
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